

HEAVEN'S

METAL

ALL METAL ALL THE TIME



GRETCHEN
NINETEEN88
WHAT SAVATAGE SAYS



Dec/Jan 2005 Issue #55 \$2.95

REVIEWS: JELLY JAM, ALTER BRIDGE, VENI DOMINE, SYMPATHY
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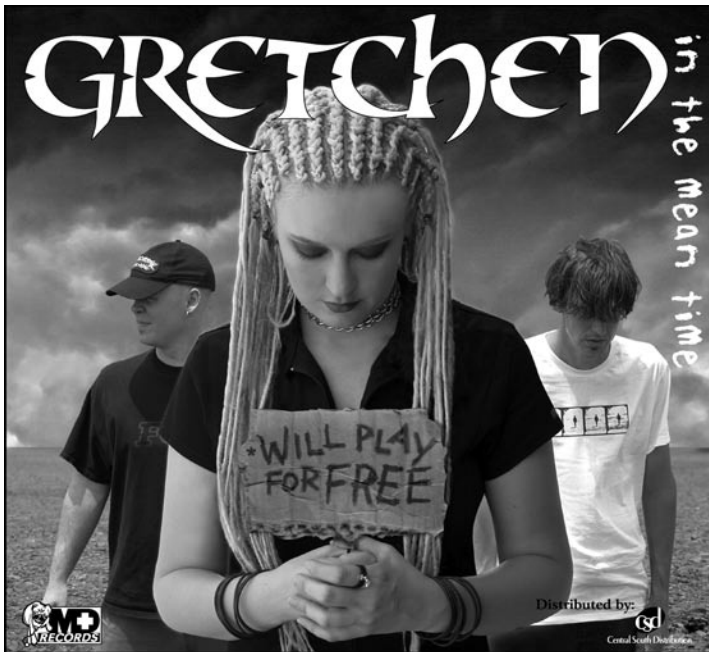
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Issue #55
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HEAVEN'S METAL

Welcome back.

It's been almost 10 years since I last published something under this name. In 1995, when Heaven's Metal Magazine changed its name to the shorter moniker of HM, I faced a lot of heat from angry metalheads who felt betrayed by the changing musical landscape and the one magazine in the Christian scene that reported on everything loud. Jimmy Brown even made a comment during the Deliverance set at Cornerstone 2001 about changing the name back to Heaven's Metal. And so, in the middle of the night Sept. 6, 2004, I was awakened with the very strong idea of putting this back together – but doing it the old-fashioned way, fanzine style. It's always exciting to take an idea like that and write down all the details that are flowing. What you're holding now is a reflection of that moment. HM Magazine is the publisher, but Heaven's Metal will be a separate entity – even coming out the opposite months of its sibling publication. Enjoy what you see and write in and tell us what you're thinking (how else are we going to fill up a "Letters to Ed" section?). [visit HMag.com/heavensmetal]

Grace and Peace,



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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



Saint

This classic metal band has truly come out of retirement. Following up their *In The Battle* release earlier this year, Saint is re-creating (meaning re-recording) their debut EP, *Warriors Of The Son*, along with two unused songs from that era. "This album is go good it raises chill bumps on us all," describes vocalist Josh Kramer. Guitarist Dee Harrington is back in the Saint fold, along with founding member and bassist Richard Lynch. Josh states that Richard's playing is "as solid as a rock," and refers to Harrington as "Dee Malmsteen-zappavai," describing his new leads as, "scary, heavy, thick, and chunky." Even though Josh can play a mean guitar himself, he is leaving that to Dee and Jerry Johnson on this new material, and not playing a lick on the

album (self control is a fruit of the Spirit). He describes Jerry's guitar playing as, "capturing John Mahan's tone and mixing in a little Michael Schenker and Jerry's own magical bag of tricks." Their drummer, Tim Lamberson, is playing without a click-track to give the sound "that slightly imperfect floating sensation" characteristic of the late 70s and early 80s, and is also lending his BGVs to several songs. While re-creating *Warriors of the Son* has stirred up interest amongst the band for those older songs, the writing bug is constantly nipping at Saint, who are already working on their sixth (as yet untitled) album of "melodic hard rock." While no live touring plans have been revealed yet, this kind of creative output is anything but retired."

DISCIPLE GOES ALL OUT

I've heard the new Disciple record; but before you get jealous of me, let me state that it was on a car stereo and impatient guitarist Brad Noah was quick to punch the skip forward button before the brain was allowed to settle in on any one song (maybe he thought I would rip off his song ideas...I dunno). But let me say this: Disciple has stuck its neck out by pursuing the music inside their head, big Def Leppard hooks and all, and it really works well.

News bullets

Long known as a killer live band, **King's X** is finally releasing its long-awaited live album - and a double disc at that - *Live All Over The Place*, which was recorded (guess where) at various shows on their most recent North American tour. Produced by the band in conjunction with Ty Tabor, it includes many of the group's classics as well as an acoustic portion featuring songs seldom performed by the band. The track listing is as follows: Groove Machine (their show opener as of late...remember when it was King?); Dogman; Believe; Little Bit of Soul; Complain; Over My Head; Manic Depression; Black Like Sunday; Finished; Screamer; Johnny; The Difference; (Thinking and Wondering) What I'm Gonna Do; Mr. Evil; Mississippi Moon; Goldilox (their best song ever? hopefully not a rendition with the audience singing along on stage); Everybody Knows a Little Bit; A Box; Talk to You; Visions (a phenomenal, thunderous rocker); Cigarettes; Summerland; We Were Born to Be Loved (with the never-ending ending); Moan Jam; and a bonus track of Over My Head. [kingsxonline.com]

Project 86's Andrew Schwab has written a book that we all must read (joining the list with *Simplicity* by Mark Salomon), because it so accurately depicts life on the road for believing rockers (perhaps the best two books of this nature since the oft-overlooked 90s tome, *Rubber Meets The Road*). Hilarious and "Oh my gosh, that's so personal, why did they include that?" stories that will keep you reading as long as your eyelids can stay open. I'm serious. These are great reads. *It's All Downhill From Here: On The Road With Project 86* is available now on Relevant Books.

Apparently **Oil** is carrying on. The remaining members are currently seeking a new vocalist and a second guitarist for a new project called Torn Apart. The band rehearses in Long Beach, CA. [see their ad in this issue's Trading Post]

Liberty N Justice are hard at work trying to top their last all-star vocalist jam, *Welcome to th Revolution*. At press time they weren't willing to name names, but their site has hints, and Saint's Josh Kramer has revealed that he's laying down a track. [3chordrecords.net]

Antestor has a new album almost ready...!



The Showdown

There is nu-metal and there is new metal. Forget that rap-rock hybrid that was out over two years ago; guitar players have been torturing their axes in a few old school ways within an unbridled intense hardcore vocal setting lately... But some guitarists wear their Iron Maiden/Scorpions double-axe influences on their ink-soaked sleeves a little more than others.

Cue The Showdown's new record, *A Chorus of Obliteration*.

"We're from 'Eliss-uh-beth-town,' Tennessee," explains vocalist David Bunton in as big a drawl as you've heard since *Hee Haw* was taken off the air. "We started in '99. We were doing punk rock stuff. Like, MxPx and Slick Shoes are big deals to us. And we just played local shows, stuff like that, and we just jammed steady for a while. Over the years, we started getting more influenced by metal. Our guitar player has always been into metal, and we just got a new drummer about a year ago and have been doing these songs (the more metal ones) now. I think it

just happened really slow. Like, one of the songs had one scream. And then, like, in another song we did a breakdown, and a scream... Then we had a song that was all screams. Then we just went from there. When we got our new drummer - he's just committed to metal 100%. It was easy to do that. All of us - we still like a whole lot of different music, but with all the metal bands coming out, we're just into metal."

The label (Mono Vs. Stereo) tried hooking the band up with Bruce Fitzhugh for management. Bruce declined due to his busy schedule, but said he wanted to produce them. That was all the convincing it took the band to end up in a Nashville studio with the metal veteran. "It was really cool. He actually turned out to be a good friend. He was easy to work with. He would stretch you. He really stepped in and helped us out where we really needed it - like song-wise. We kinda learned a lot from him. He doesn't play around. He just gets it done. It rules. We had a good time. He's a fun guy, too."

If you get a chance to see this band on tour, do not hesitate. Go.

British melodic metal band **Stairway** are currently working and recording new material for a new, as yet untitled album, with a tentative release date of Spring/Summer 2005.

While not considered a "Christian band," HammerFall's bassist, **Magnus Rosen**, is doing something so Christ-like that it seemed appropriate to share. His globe-trotting solo bass tour's South American dates will have *all* the proceeds donated to homeless children. He's been trying to underwrite this idea for over a year now and couldn't find any sponsors, so he paid for it all himself. "I tour with HammerFall every 2 years for 10 months, so I have time for this kind of project." The last time Magnus toured South America with HammerFall, he used all of his earnings to put one woman through school for a year. "I don't think all people need to do this, but if you have extra time or money and like to help (then), take the chance. It's nice to care. Try!" With the future in mind, Rosen says he will continue to give up to 3 weeks every year to help the needy. Now, *that* is cool.

Extol just finished up its new album, which will be released at the end of March in the Christian (CBA) market, and May 1st in the general market.

Brutal Planet Distribution and Retroactive records are all about re-issuing limited edition albums. Here's a list of upcoming and recent releases: **Bride** - *Snakes Alive* (live from Cstone '92); **Regime** (ex-Soldier) - *Straight Through Your Heart*; **Sacrament** - *Testimony of Apocalypse* (including 7 demo tracks); **Rez** - *DMZ* and *Mommy Doesn't Love Daddy Anymore*; **Believer** - *Sanity Obscure*; **Final Axe** - *Beyond Hell's Gates*; **Brainchild** - *Mindwarp*; **Circle of Dust** - s/t; **Seventh Angel** - *Lament for the Weary* and *The Torment*; and **Haven** - *Age of Darkness* (plus lots of bonus tracks).

Solid State has a slew of heavy new releases: **Showbread** - *No Sir, Nihilism Is Not Practical*; various artists - *This Is Solid State, Volume 5*; **He Is Legend** - *I Am Hollywood*; **The Chariot** - *Everything is Alive, Everything is Breathing, Nothing is Dead, and Nothing is Bleeding*. The *Young Bloods Tour* has the label's rookie acts sharing the bill: The Chariot, He Is Legend, and Showbread.

METAL TRACKS

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Sariah Bishop

Interview by Alex S. Johnson & DVP*

On the back of *Mute Malevolence*, you are looking at yourself in a mirror. The color scheme in all the photos is black and red. These are passionate, intense colors, the colors of death and lust. Tell me about that picture. What are you looking at? What do you see?

I'm looking at a new birth putting to death all my demons and the shadow that carried me.

Many, if not most, of the songs on *Mute Malevolence* depict religious themes and experiences: sin, guilt, redemption, and so on. Do you consider yourself a religious person?

I am not a religious person at all. However, I am spiritual. Being French and American and from the South, a lot comes with the surroundings. It's generational, inherited in my family. I am very fond of the Ancient of Days, although voodoo and the uneasy is a common thing that ran in my family's past. I am not a partaker in the craft and I am reminded of this often. It's similar to addiction. Just because an addiction may run in your bloodline, you don't have to be a part of the addiction. We all have choices. The song, "2000 Sins" is when I speak of certain things, such as the demons. This has haunted me in my dreams ever since the days of my youth. That was the beginning of me seeking some kind of understanding of light and dark.

Some of the songs could be read as criticizing religion, at least religious hypocrisy. I'm thinking of the song, "Virtuous," in which a woman is being outcast. Have you encountered any criticism of this aspect of your work?

Criticism comes and I have been through the war of religion. Lyrically it gets kind of touchy in places. "Virtuous" is simply about temptation. Similar to a Picasso painting, the viewer can look at the same painting and get a million different interpretations.

Would you consider yourself a "Christian artist?"*

I wouldn't consider myself a "Christian artist."

It's kind of an awkward question, because some artists who have that faith choose (wisely) not to let their music only exist for one segment of the population, and labels can do more harm than good sometimes...*

I hope I answered your question concerning being considered a Christian artist. As you said before, that is a kind of an awkward question, but very much true nonetheless... I indeed have the faith and I have both Christian and gothic fans... so it's a very touchy situation, and if an artist can stand and just be who they are and touch a multitude of people who can relate, then what's the use of carrying a label? I just am Sariah Bishop...

News bullets

Tourniquet has re-released 1994's critically acclaimed CD *Vanishing Lessons*. The new release clocks in at over 73 minutes, compared to the original length of 48 minutes. Lots of extra tracks including a couple live tracks from the HM stage at Cornerstone 2002. Also featured is a 12-page color booklet, new liner notes, Bible reference verses and more. [tourniquet.net]

Jamie Rowe has a new solo album, which is also in Spanish and includes a DVD. [jamierowe.com]

Mick (Nineteen88) **Rowe's** wife Tracy is featured in this month's *Savage Tattoo Magazine*.

Evanesence is releasing a two-disc DVD/CD, called *Anywhere But Home*, which chronicles its recent sold-out Euro-tour. Directed by Hamish Hamilton (U2, Peter Gabriel), the concert features both 5.1 and two-track audio mixes and the previously unreleased studio recording of the composition, "Missing." The DVD features the band's four music videos ("Bring Me to Life," "Going Under," "My Immortal," and "Everybody's Fool"), an hour-long behind-the-scenes program, and some special surprises navigatable through the specially designed menus.

David Anderson of **Dig Hay Zoose** reveals that the band is back. "We're organizing and writing and getting ready to record a new demo, but that is a few months away." The band will probably choose a new name. "We originally got back together to re-record the album's worth of material we demo'd in 1996, but never released. As we worked through the initial stages of development, it became clear that God had other plans for us. We've had a lot of time to get our respective spiritual lives back in order and God is definitely creating something new here. We all feel called to do worship in a different way. We all received a vision to provide worship to that group of folks like ourselves who are disenchanted with the flat worship scene happening right now."

Kekal has nearly finished its new album, *Acidity*. "We believe that it will be the strongest and most exciting album we have ever done so far."

CONCERT REVIEW

ULI JON ROTH : LEGENDS OF ROCK

Travelling abroad is a very cool experience. What can make it surreal, however, is doing something "normal" on foreign soil, like catching a show. This particular European tour, *Legends of Rock*, featured Uli Roth, Jack Bruce, Glenn Hughes, and Michael Schenker. I happen to believe that Uli and Schenker make up two of the three greatest guitarists alive (the other six-string master being Frank Marino), and the thought of seeing a couple of these guys on the same stage was a dream come true. In a not-surprising move, Michael Schenker cancelled out of the tour (he's probably backed out of more shows than Zao...I'm serious), and Uli asked Frank Marino to fill the empty slot. I happened to have travelling to England on my schedule (for the cool annual Meltdown Conference), so adding this little show to the calendar was a delight.

Frank Marino started off the multi-set show after a quiet introduction by Uli, who acted as both headliner, guest player, and emcee. Marino launched into "The Answer," a song which has taken on more profound meaning for this listener after the artist began professing his faith (for a definitive statement of faith, check out his *Eye of the Storm* album from 2000). His masterful tone of controlled but on the edge of out-of-control tone immediately showed that this guy is a heavyweight in the world of rock guitar. That Gibson SG he plays seems like an old servant that gleefully does his bidding. He transitioned into a much older tune, "Strange Universe," and then flew into a great song from his feloniously out-of-print and underrated *What's Next* album, "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame" (to which he should be inducted). His solo sounded uncharacteristically thin, or "tinny," but he found the groove and then played with his teeth before a segue into his concert staple – "Electric Reflections of War," which includes a tribute called "Ode to A Little Town."

Uli played a handful of songs, including his "Sky Overture" and his adaptation of Vivaldi's "The Summer" from "The Four Seasons." He shocked the audience by play-



ing "Maria" from *West Side Story*. He ended his solo set with "Hiroshima." I'd always heard that a London audience knew and loved its rock and metal music, but I saw first-hand when someone from the crowd requested one of the best obscure songs of all time, "We'll Burn The Sky," to which he smiled and explained, "Klaus Meine is not here to sing it." Ya gotta respect an audience that knows a good catalog.

Glenn Hughes, who along with Uli has made some interesting lyrical statements about God and spiritual things over the years, did many of the songs his voice became famous for – Deep Purple's "Mistreated" and "Burn." Jack Bruce was able to shine by singing the Cream classic "Sunshine of Your Love," and then Frank Marino strolled back

out for some additional all-star jamming. He took "Voodoo Chile" and sung and played it great. Then he was joined by Uli for "All Along The Watchtower," which was one of those priceless moments that I did my best to burn into permanent memory. I mean, what other guitarists alive could do this song better justice than these two? Bruce helped the group cover "Eleanor Rigby," followed by Hughes taking over for a finale of "A Whiter Shade of Pale."

Sigh. If only a lineup like this would tour the USA... If it was up to me, the G3Tours would only feature Marino, Roth, and Schenker. ➡

NINETEEN 88

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FUN

Mick Rowe has managed to create a myriad of bands and projects over the years (since Tempest ended).

A fascination with things dark and gothic brought forth Midnight Orchestra and Goliath (with multiple album deals), a respect and love for melodic rock and worship music were done as a solo project; but it's the love of good, clean fun that's brought about perhaps his best work. Enter this year's incarnation: Nineteen 88

What's it sound like, Mick?

"The sound is vintage German Metal. Lots of AC/DC, Scorpions and Accept. Just straight on Heavy Hard Rock! It is Metal circa 1984 before we got hit with the hair bands. Unlike The Darkness, this is not a hair metal band. This is Rock and Roll without shame. I know all bands will not want to tour with us because we will show them up, because we rock so hard!"

What brought this on?

"I was watching The Darkness on Fuse and said to my wife, 'I wish I would have done that. I would have done this and that different.' She said to me, 'Go for it.'"

Describe what you're bringing with Nineteen 88.

"There is little humor in the Christian market for some reason. I see the bands that are all, 'We're mad and angry for the Lord,' but not many, 'God is awesome. Let's have a good time . . . outside of the pop market anyway. This is a no-hassle good time. If you like the Darkness, but could use less f bombs, then Nineteen88 is for you. It is over-the-top and not to be taken too serious(ly). Hard Rock and Metal are so serious. The bands take themselves too serious. Get over yourself and play your guitar."

"The purpose of Nineteen88 is nothing more than a G-rated good time. There will be no preaching, no altar calls, etc. Nineteen88 is for anyone and everyone that wants a loud show band and wants it clean. This is the band you wanna take your friends to and see the lights, fire, explosions and go home and say, 'I was entertained to the fullest.' Our kinda music is your kinda music." →

[nineteen88.com]



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What is the band currently up to?

Mia: Well, we've been working on the release of our new CD, *In the Mean Time*, our new video, and we're looking into the details of doing a USO tour this winter. We've got a lot going on, we're very excited about it.

What has the band been through the past few years? It's been awhile since we last heard a new album from you guys.

Mia: Well, we were signed to a record label for about 3 years, we had some bad experiences and now we're no longer with them. But even in the midst of the bad, I know that God was looking out for us – I believe He tried to warn us... we just had stars in our eyes and we didn't want to believe that something was wrong.

Dave: To clarify what she's talking about – our first CD was rushed – we did it in a couple of weeks or something like that.

It took almost a year for it to come out and then after being in stores for one month the label announced to us that they were closing down. It took quiet a while for us to be free from that... and you know the money part of it is still not totally worked out.

Stephen: There have definitely been some major challenges on all levels, but we stuck it out. And now we have another opportunity... how fortunate and blessed is that? Many bands never make it out of the gate a second



time after all the stuff they encounter in bad business deals, personality issues, and so on, but we manage to keep pressing onward and inward. Plus I think the time afforded us much opportunity to grow musically and personally that we might not have had otherwise.

What lessons have you learned from these experiences?

Dave: I've learned to check out things that I'm told in business. Don't get in a hurry, if it's that important and urgent – then really take some time to look into things. You know “the devil is in the details”.

Mia: Don't ignore the sick feeling in your stomach. To quote Dave Ramsey, “We paid our stupid tax,” now we're moving on with our lives.

Stephen: Never give up. I think we've grown to a point where whatever else comes we know we're in the best of hands. You hope for the best in people but ultimately our trust has to be in God to get through the

cassettes were the rage.

I know this may sound funny... but seriously, most musicians are not adept in business – and when it comes down to it – that's all this is – it's business before art, ministry, self-expression or whatever other noble cause you want to attach to it. So get someone that can advise you on the business side – who will understand the fine print. Because chances are you're gonna have situations that arise that you never thought of and you don't want to be in that situation having signed your rights away. It's hard enough to get wrongs corrected when you are on the receiving end – don't give up what little protections you have.

The second thing I would say is to reiterate what Mia said: Just do as much as you can do yourself – because no one is going to take care of you and yours like you do.

What made you guys continue on in the face of all this?

Mia: Because this is not a hobby with us.

and read a bit (it's funny how I can go weeks sometimes and leave something like that out) — So I sat down and turned straight to Hebrews 12. The first thing I read was verse 18 & by the time I got to verse 28, it was like a shell crumbling off me... very supernatural – God just really operated on me on the inside. I finally had peace and understanding about the things we were going through – and what God was trying to get through to me through my Pastor. I'm finally at a place – where I can't be shaken by circumstance... and if anything at all positive has come out of this whole ordeal – it's that.

Stephen: I certainly have to credit our church and the true grace of fellowship. I also think we helped one another to maintain focus. I'm not getting any younger and I wanted to quit as well at times, but I still felt like I couldn't be doing anything else and that there was no reason to cash it all in. Since our last CD I had to deal with divorce and feeling like my life was falling apart and still retain a sense of who I was in the midst of it all. I know being committed to the band kept me going and my relationship with Dave and

Don't ignore the sick feeling in your stomach. To quote Dave Ramsey, “We paid our stupid tax,” now we're moving on with our lives.

obstacles, otherwise the grand cave-in is unavoidable.

What would be your advice for other artists?

Mia: The best advice I can give to other bands, don't let anyone take control of your dream. There will be people that promise you the world and don't follow through because it's not their dream. There are of course, certain things in the industry that only professionals can handle, but on the whole, if you work really hard and are passionate about what you do (and knowing that the big guy is looking out for you), you will be successful.

Dave: You know we get asked this a lot – and I always think to myself – “Why are they asking me this?” It's not like I have this magic word for anyone or that we are anything to begin with.

The thing I tell everyone is “get a lawyer.” Not a just any lawyer, mind you – but one that has had experience in the music industry... recently, and not 20 years ago when

This is who we are. Everything in our lives revolves around God and the band. Just because all this junk happened, the calling and the desire to write and play music doesn't just go away. I don't think we could've just hung it up even if we had wanted to. And what's amazing is the timing of everything that went into this new CD, we've been blessed with the best producer (in my opinion) in the Christian Music industry and one of the best video production guys in the business who shot our music video. Both of these individuals are about to really “hit it big,” we just happened to know them and were able to reap the benefits of that.

Dave: Actually man... I was ready to quit. And Mia and I were really talking about it... I was frustrated and stressing out totally. Then one Sunday at church, my pastor asked me to stand up and said he had a word for me. He basically looked at me and told me that the “Time of shaking was over” – which really kinda went over my head at that time – I took it in a totally surface-y way. Then about a month or so later, the Holy Spirit just really impressed on me that I needed to sit down

Mia kept me challenged to press on through a difficult time when I wasn't so open to many other people. And my church showed me love – plain and simple, even when I felt unlovable. When it's all said and done, it's more than making music...it has to be. Our love and involvement with music just happens to be one major common denominator that brings us closer to God by going through things together and ultimately it's about making the best of our lives.

Why go on?

Mia: Because I know that there is more for us to do.

Dave: I haven't the slightest idea of what else to do. I mean this is what has been put in front of me to do... I've at times wanted, even begged to do something else, but more than anything I want to be found faithful to the call on my life...

Stephen: I don't think God is finished with us. It always seems there is something new around the corner. Maybe new opportunities, new challenges for personal growth and



What Savatage Says

Savatage: If you follow heavy progressive power metal, you know the name. Listen in as Editor Doug Van Pelt talks to instrumentalist Jon Oliva.

DV: Hey I saw you in Austin back a few weeks ago.

JO: Oh, cool.

Good show.

Yeah it was alright. Um... it's a cool little club. I think we had, if I'm not mistaken that night we had some equipment (bleep) going on but... that's usually par for the course when you work playing American clubs, though.

Right, I'm sure you'd like to be playing theaters.

Yeah, it's not quite exactly right... exactly. It's kinda like, "Whoo," some of these places you wonder how they even put shows on?

Can you relate to the young bands starting out today? What sort of empathy do you have for young musicians searching for a musical identity? If you were 15 what style of music do you think you would play and why?

Wow... that's a great question. To be honest with you, I have not really been very much on top of a lot of the really new, *new* bands that have been coming out — as far as the metal thing goes, because I really haven't heard any. I mean most of them are either that kind of rap-metal type of stuff, which I think is cool... I mean some of it's alright. It's so hard nowadays to get anything going and to keep anything going. Coming into the business now at this time has gotta be really difficult for some of the young bands because it's so hard to get anything going on. And to keep a deal is like... you know, I feel blessed every morning that . . . we've been going for 18 years which is a really remarkable run... I would say to the younger bands, "Stick to your guns and do what

you do because it seems to have worked for us." I mean, we never chased after anything, we just kinda always plodded along and done what we've done, but for some reason we withstood the test of time, and in a lot of places we're still growing. We've got a solid fan base now and we've got... you know, in other parts of the world where we're getting bigger and bigger and I think that it's due to the fact that we've stayed on this tour ourselves and done what we wanted to do, so I guess that would be the best thing I could say. If it were the style of music I would be playing if I was 15 now would be Kid Rock stuff.

Uh huh...

Everyone else who's 15 is playing it.

Ha ha

But that's just the happening thing right now it's just like when I was 15 and Kiss and everything came out and stuff. Everything was playing Kiss, because that's what all the girls liked. So whatever all the girls like, that is what all the guys are going to play, because all the guys are trying to pick up women. That's just the way it is when you are 15 years old, ya know? You wanna impress the girls and have all the fun and that crap, so whatever is big with everybody usually will be what you start to dig into and then your individual styles come later, ya know, once you burn out on it and stuff. "This stuff really isn't that good, ya know?" You start to develop your own likes; but, yeah, I'd probably be doing that. But I mean, the best advice that I'd give anybody is to stick to your guns and do what you do... don't compromise.

Yeah... I appreciate your answer. I know that a lot of the classic metal bands that I interview have a deep-seated resentment towards today's new metal and alternative bands.

No, there's no resentment at all, I think that's really... That's really narrow-minded of them to

think that because in order for metal to survive, or hard rock to survive, bands have to try to take it to another step or to do something different with it. And then people who prefer traditional metal will stick with traditional metal but, it only keeps that genre of music alive, ya know, because people are willing to experiment. I think that's really narrow-minded of people to think that they resent the guys like that... It's like, give em' a break, they're having fun man. It's like you do what you do, they do what they do. You play music they play music. It's just a little bit different. It shouldn't be like that.

Yeah... here here. What sort of risk did you think you were making by leaving the lead vocal position, rejoining and then adding an additional vocalist for touring, and how did that all come about and how did it feel?

Well I mean, it's a two-man job, first of all; and the only reason I sang all the vocals on the record is because I didn't want to delay the record another six months looking for a singer. I mean, that kind of left us on the lamb for a little bit, because we wanted to make sure he knew he was making the right decision; but then in the mean time, I mean, we were still recording the record. We were already a year behind, thanks to the old record label we had that wouldn't let us go. We had to go through all that bull-crap, so we were already a year behind and I was like, "We're already halfway finished with the record and it was, like, either shut down for six months and look for a singer or finish the damn record." We had a big meeting about it and we just thought it would just be best for me to finish the record, the fans would get a kick out of it, we wouldn't have to delay it any longer, and we could take our time and look for a singer. Blake came in on tour, you know, (to) make sure he's the guy we want; make sure we're the guys he wants and then put him on the next record. And umm...that's basically what the game plan was. I'm glad it worked that way, because we wouldn't have found Damond if we would have done anything differently. Damond brings a whole other thing to the table... I always wanted two singers in the band. The only reason I was the singer in the band was because I was the only guy that could sing. It wasn't out of choice, believe me! It was just that was the way it was, and then, you know, after I burnt my voice out and I took a little siesta, you know, before Chris got killed you know... Chris Caffery and I were coming back into the band after the *Edge of Thorns* tour, so we were going to have the two lead singers (and) the two guitar players and then Chris passed away, so that just kinda screwed everything up and then it just took time for us to get everything back together after that. But, ya know, I think that having two singers gives the band a whole other world we can go to. There's not a lot of bands out there that have two really good singers. It just opens a lot of doors for us to do stuff.

How does it feel to have another vocalist sing a line that was written for yourself? How do you get beyond the possessiveness and jealousy that this context would challenge one with?

Well that's just childish (bleep), ya know? It's like, you see, I have to be honest with myself to realize

that there's just things I can't do anymore. You know? I mean I'm going to be 40 years old. It doesn't bother me, because it's like I would rather... I'm not going to do anything on stage that I don't listen to in rehearsals and I think don't sound great, or I wouldn't be proud of anyone to hear. It's like we rehearse very hard and we make sure that everything works out and, you know, the great thing about Damond is that he can go into my world but he can also cover Zach's world easily, ya know. It doesn't bother me that he sings. He sings a couple of things that I used to do but that's because I can't do them anymore.

Ok, I'm going to give you a list of albums and I would like you to comment on each one.

Ok.

You ready?

Yeah.

Gretchen goes to Nebraska by Kings X.

Ahh... Only heard it once, but it's pretty good.

Number of the Beast by Iron Maiden.

Ahh... One of my top ten favorite metal records.

Heaven and Hell by Black Sabbath.

Top five favorite heavy metal records.

Images and Words by Dream Theater.

Ah... Interesting, but a little bit too . . . Ahh... too *out there* for me. Too long.

To Hell with the Devil by Stryper.

I don't even remember that band. I mean I remember hearing of them, but is that the religious band?

Uh huh.

Actually they were pretty good for what they did, if you really think about it. They, umm . . . actually were pretty good. That particular record I don't really remember though.

Uh huh. Moving Pictures by Rush.

Excellent record.

Strikes by Black Foot.

Ahh... I'm not a big fan of Southern... Southern type of rock so, anything that's got that Southern edge to it...

(Doug groans)

I know, and I live in Florida... I've just never been into that. I hate country music, so anything to me that even smells country is taboo.

Anything by Uriah Heep.

I loved Uriah Heep. They were one of my favorite bands when I was growing up. Mick Box was a very big influence on me. I used to love his sound. His sounds were so cool.

The Wall by Pink Floyd.

Umm... I liked... That actually is my *least favorite* Pink Floyd record and I'm a big Pink Floyd fan. Everyone thinks I'm out of my mind but... it's a good record, but I like *Dark Side of the Moon*, and, umm... what's the other one — *Wish You Were Here*

— a lot better.

Operation Mindcrime by Queensryche.

Ahh, that's a fantastic album! That's Queensryche at their peak right there.

Um hmm... Never Mind by Nirvana.

I was never a big fan of grunge, but ah, Nirvana was the best at it, I think. I mean, that particular record was actually a very important record, because it did spawn a lot of stuff. I thought he was a genius, ya know, and it's a shame that he ahh... that things ended up the way that they ended up, because it would have been interesting to see where he would have taken things.

Yeah. How does the relationship between artist and producer become one in which the producer writes the lyrics?

Well, I mean, umm... Paul (O'Neill, producer of

I think I need to talk to Him one day. I don't know, I don't really think about it much, ya know? I have my own, ya know, beliefs and stuff like that. I don't know what exactly I believe and I am very confused religiously.

Poets & Madmen)... Paul is like a victim of my situation as the same way I became the singer. You know, I used to write the lyrics before Paul O'Neill. I used to hate it. It was a nightmare for me, and I was always looking for, you know... I was always into looking for a partner that I could work with. I can write great lyrics, but I write scattered lyrics, ya know? So it's like it's hard for me to make sense of things. As our friendship and stuff grew and as we worked together and stuff like that... We just kind of developed a method of working together that just seems to make us both happy. And you know, with me handling the music and most of the melody stuff and um, I write a lot of the lyrics when I am making up the melodies when I am actually doing the, when we're actually jammin' and I'm actually just making (bleep) up as I'm going. A lot of those lyrics end up on the CD's so what he'll do is he'll take those phrases and stuff that I do and he'll just mold them into the story and stuff like that. He's amazing for doing that. I mean I'll just be sitting there going (insert incoherent babbling) and he'll make words out of it and I'm like, "Is that what I said?" And he says, "Of course that's what you said!" (Both laugh) It's just the way that we work together and then what happens is like I basically dive into the music, he dives into the lyrics and every couple days, ya know, I'll buzz by and he'll show me what he's got and we'll make some changes together and then I show him what I have and we'll make some (more) changes together, so we both get involved, but it's just kind of the way Lennon and McCartney did it. I mean they wrote whole songs on their own and everything was credited. It's just the way Paul and I have worked... I do the music, he does the lyrics and that's how we have it credited; but we both interject there in each other's world, but it's just the way it's developed. Paul is more of a band mem-

ber than he is a producer. I guess Paul is like the invisible band member, where his part comes in is in the studio, which you know, you don't see that on stage. It's a very important thing, so it's more like... me and him kinda produced the Savatage stuff on a 50/50 basis, so I guess it's like his part of the band is ya know, the story and the lyrics and that's what he brings to the table and it makes life a lot easier for me and it makes it easier for me to focus on taking the music another step without having to worry, "God I gotta think of something to write about." He just has an overabundance of ideas and is very easy to work with.

Tell me how you guys came across the idea for the epic "Morphine Child" and briefly explain the concept for our readers.

Well that's the song that's basically about the photographer Kevin Carter. He took the picture of the girl in the Sudan which is what ended up driving him mad and he eventually ended up taking his life

in real life. And that is what that song is all about. Actually, that song is like 3 different songs for 3 different pieces of things that we had. I had that intro piece for a long time and could never figure out what to do with it and then Chris Caffery had the main riff and then I had the verse part. We wanted to do an epic type of song. We wanted to push the limits as far as length goes and we wanted to see if we could do a 10-minute song and not make it sound like a 10 minute song, you know? And just try to do something that we haven't done before. So, "Morphine Child" has different elements of music in it. It's got that almost "boom bop boom" at the end thing there, where it's kind of a weird solo section. It's an Egyptian guitar riff that we kind of heard in an Indian restaurant and turned it backwards. And we switched it around in rehearsal; and that's the guitar riff and some of those big Queen vocal pieces are things that I've had that I could never find. "I'm too old to be living this..." All that stuff like that I've had those little sections floating around for months and months and I could never find any place to put them. "Morphine Child" was kind of a magical song, because all these pieces just seemed to line up perfectly, one right after another. Paul helped us musically with the ending — ya know, the runs and stuff in the end. It was weird and it was a song that we spent the most time of any Savatage song ever in the studio. We basically pretty much put two and a half to three months into that song alone, if you add all the overdubs and all the vocal work and stuff that was done on it.

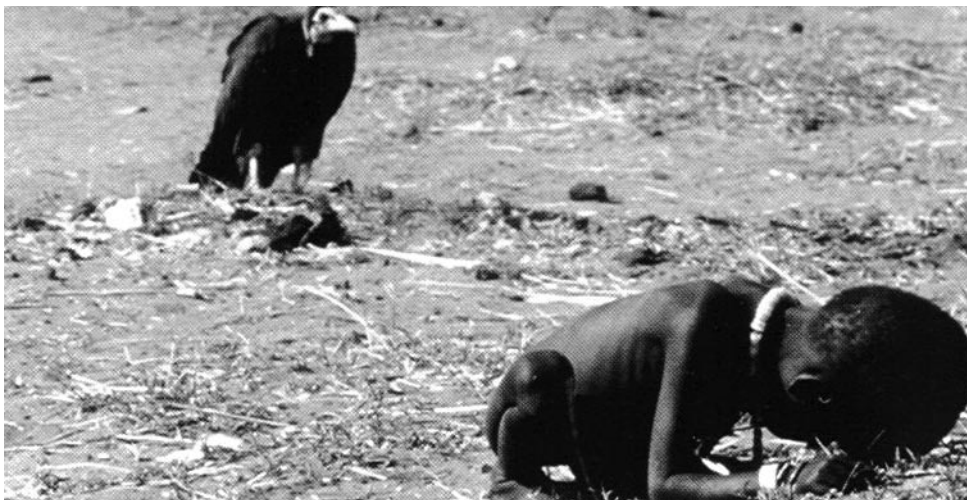
Wow. Congrats on a fine piece. The whole album is a really fine crafted piece in my opinion.

Well, you know, we spent the time on the stuff. It's like, if we're gonna put the records out, we take the time and make sure that we're happy with them. Ya know, that we feel that's the best quality,

the best mix, the best production that we can offer. And if it costs us extra, we'll spend extra money out of our own pockets. We spent thousands and thousands of dollars out of our own pockets to make our own records better, because once you put that CD out, it's out there forever.

Uh huh.

I still cringe sometimes when I hear the first two Savatage CD's, because the production is just so horrible. I wish I could remix them, but ya know, you don't want to touch stuff like that, so for now I learned my lesson after a couple of records that didn't come out right because we didn't put the time into them. And that's something that Paul is a firm believer in also, so ever since Paul has really come into the picture we have made sure that every record we have taken it to the limits as far as putting the time into it and making sure that it's something that gonna stand up in 5 years.



What have you guys thought about the DVD audio possibilities?

Well we're doing a DVD this year of a live thing that we're filming and recording. The DVD is going to include all the old video's with Chris, some footage that we have of him that no one has seen before, then it's going to have a live show from this tour with two new songs that we're going to bring in with Damon and that's going to bridge the gap between the next studio album. We're actually leaving Sunday for Europe so we're on our way.

Is that going to have any 5.1 surround sound mixing on it?

I don't know what their gunna... SPV is totally financing the whole thing and they are doing everything with it, so I really don't know what kind of format they are doing it in. They said they are spending... they're going all out on it, so I guess whatever the best quality you can have is what they are going to go with.

Tell me about the song Jesus Saves.

The one off of *Streets*?

Uh huh.

What about it?

Oh, lyrically or...

Well, I mean, lyrically it's just basically just the beginning of the *Streets* story, kind of... Just describing DT Jesus, which is the stud – the main character of the story. Jesus was a talker, just an out of place New Yorker, because that's what he was. He was a rock star, so umm... That song basically describes how he... You know, the story begins with him and getting his band and how he broke up his band and all that stuff like that, and how he started to turn into a rock icon and that's basically what that song's about.

Ummm... cool.

Good ol' DT Jesus.

In "The Rumor," ah... the new album, the songwriter seems to have some sort of reconciliation with Jesus. Please elaborate.

Paul loves Jesus (laughs). Actually umm... Well, in

man! I mean, it is really sad what this guy went through. I mean, just horrible nightmares and, ya know, he tried to drink them away... He went from alcohol to drugs to a mental institution to killing himself, so obviously the picture that this guy took... I've seen it and ya know, to me it's one of the heaviest things I've ever seen. But I couldn't imagine being the guy that actually was standing there and took it and then this... this... this girl dies and this vulture starts to eat her, I mean that is (bleep) heavy man. You can sing about the devil all you want, but that is heavy

Uh huh...

That is just very heavy

I think about that when I look at photojournalism like the helicopter that was hovering above Ronald Denny when he was being beat at the L.A. riots and just other times, like the *Faces of Death* crap where somebody is filming something and you'd think that they could put the camera down and go help.

Yeah right, exactly. Some of those movies are very troublesome.

Yeah.

I mean, ya know... it's a part of life but it... it doesn't have to be that way. There's no reason why thousands and thousands of children should be left to starve to death... I mean... it's just... With all the powers in this world and all the money and stuff like that, you'd think that they could figure something out, ya know, but...

Right...

Ya know, it's just weird... What are you going to do? In Paul's way... he just likes to make people aware of these things in our genre. The normal Savatage fan might not normally be the kind of guy who would be watching CNN, World News and stuff like that, so I guess in Paul's way he likes to educate the metalheads. In a way that they can understand. Then when they hear it in a song and they hear about the story, they investigate it and they realize. We've had a lot of that. I had a lot of that with *Dead Winter Dead*, and I've already gotten a lot of letters and stuff from this thing, where people never even knew about this guy and then after they heard "Morphine Child" and read the story they went and did some research on it and and stuff... and more blown away after they investigated it a little bit so...

Right... What do you think of Jesus Christ?

Ah... well... I think ah... I think I need to talk to Him one day. I don't know, I don't really think about it much, ya know? I have my own, ya know, beliefs and stuff like that. I don't know what exactly I believe and I am very confused religiously. There's a lot of things I don't agree with umm... I was born and raised Catholic, so ya know, and there's a lot of stuff in the Catholic religion that I'm not... that I don't agree with. You know, and I mean I do believe that there is some kind of something, I just don't know what it is. I think you can call it Jesus, you can call it Buddha, you can call it whoever you like, ya know? Umm... I really do believe that there is just one ultimate power somewhere, and ahh...

it's just channeled differently... Different types of people can channel it differently or get a different vision from it. You know what I mean?

Uh huh...

But it's all the same... umm... in my opinion... and ahh... I definitely believe that there is something after you leave this earth... Your soul lives on and goes somewhere. I don't know where, but I've had too many weird experiences and too many weird things happen to where I believe that you just drop dead and it's over with, ya know what I mean?

Yeah.

It's just too much that I've seen and, and witnessed personally to ahh... ya know, to buy that one. So, I mean... you know, it's something I'd like to get into when I get older to try to figure out, but right now... it's like ya know... I just want to play music and have fun. I'll worry about dying when I'm dead.

Huh. What do you think....

Ha ha ha... That makes no sense whatsoever, but... I'll worry about death when it's time to die, I mean...

Yeah.

I mean, I don't know... I really don't know. It's something that I'm very confused about, ya know? It's like I wanna believe in everything that you die and float up to heaven, and you're floating around, just like Kenny and the (bleep)ahh... Southpark movie... But I seriously doubt that's what happens. I think your whole existence is a bunch of different journeys, ya know... and this is just one of em...

Uh huh...

And ahh... when you leave this journey you move on to your next journey. You know... that's the way I think.

What do you think of the claims of Jesus to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father, but by me?"

Ahh... Well, I mean... I don't know. I mean it's... You know, a lot of that stuff that's... ya know, who... Ya know, that's another thing that's really confusing is the whole Bible and all the stuff that's said in it, because a lot of it's contradicting. So... ya know... I don't know. I mean, did He really say that or did someone interpret Him saying that? Ya know, you don't really know. You don't really know if all these things they say Jesus said that He actually said, because He didn't write it down in the books, it's not the Bible by Jesus... Ya know what I'm saying?

Uh huh.

It's other people's recounts of what went on, so if you take that into consideration the way things are now when you tell somebody's story – by the time it gets to the third person the story is a lot different than the way it originally happened, you know what I'm saying?

Uh huh.

I think a lot of that probably went on in... in the

Bible, in the writing of the Bible and stuff like that where a lot of stuff was blown out of proportion and just, people didn't know back then that, what blowing something out of proportion was ya know? They were just so amazed at the littlest things that it was like a miracle! Ya know?

Uh huh.

But was it really a miracle or was it just a coincidence? You know what I'm saying?

Yeah.

So that's a lot of stuff that's confusing to me, too. So, I don't know, man. I'm a twisted religious person.

But very honest.

Well, ya know... I mean I'm totally blunt honest about it. I don't know... ya know? I don't know... I don't... I could tell you when my brother got killed it really changed my whole opinion on... on... what's right and wrong, because, ya know... it was just... That was a real... That one hit me really bad, because it was like... here was a guy that never did anything wrong to anybody, ya know? And to just be killed like that by some... by some lunatic who shouldn't have even been on the street... It's like, if there is a God, then were the (bleep) where you on October 16th?

Uh huh...

That's the way I feel so... I know I'll probably get crucified in the end for that, but that's really the way I... That's when I started freaking out, because I was like, "Well, huh... right... He's with God now," or something like that, and I was like, you know, "If there really was a God and He is supposed to be looking out for the good people, and the people who have done good, it was like... anyone who knew my brother Chris – he was the most humble, nicest guy you would ever want to meet on the planet – and, you know, to have something like that happen to him... Then what justifies that? You know what I'm saying?

Yeah.

It's like that's... When that happened, it really changed my whole outlook on religion completely.

Yeah I think that ahh... That's more an example of honesty, I mean it's anger, but it's... it's honesty and it's good.

It's also... I also know other people, not just my brother. I have other people that I know or that I've known that bad things have happened to them that shouldn't have happened to them, because they were good people, you know, and nice people and stuff. But still (bleep) happens man. You see guys who, you know, are not really great people and do (bleep) like that and they're the guys who are driving around in Trans Ams and all this (bleep) like that. Meanwhile, it's like the nice people are the people who are struggling to feed their kids every week. It's just weird man. I look at things weird like that sometimes.

Yeah.

And I tend to ramble.

No, that's good for an interview. Ahh... you know what hits me like a ton of bricks is ahh... when you're looking at the Bible and I think about myths or religious scriptures... If somebody wanted to sit down and write, you know, a myth or cut a form of religion... I just can't get around that the Bible wouldn't be that book, because it's too honest in places, there's too many warts. Some of the heroes in the Bible are shown too realistically.

It's like I said... a lot of the stuff in there, I know it's gotta be a lot of these stories like are fabricated, you know, because at that time anything that happened that was out of the ordinary was considered amazing, you know, because people would just... you know... When it was going on and they saw a falling star it was like a miracle light from heaven! You know, you know what I'm saying?

Uh huh.

Just simple things like that – atmospheric things that happened and stuff were being chalked up as miracles, and being documented and being written by people as like... the parting of the Red Sea... who knows that it wasn't an earthquake or stuff like that? You know, or how they destroyed this and that. Who knows it wasn't an earthquake that destroyed it or a hurricane or something like that, ya know? It was all of a sudden God waved His hand and the clouds turned black and, you know, it rained for ahh... well it's like, couldn't it have been like a really bad storm ya know?

Uh huh.

But, they just... It's so... like, over dramatized in there. It was, like, everything was like the end of the world.

You know what trips me out is how ahh... Well, the resurrection of Christ. That is obviously a miracle and it was documented in the Bible that He rose, He ascended to Heaven, and there was 500 people there. If that book was written, like, in 50-60 A.D., which a lot of scientists think it was, those 500 witnesses were still walking around that could have refuted it if it was just a lie or a farce – there was 500 witnesses.

I bet it would have to be pretty crowded up there now.

Yeah.

Wow... condo's in heaven... "Okay, you will have room B22, you will be next to ahh... Jimi Hendrix," and ya know... we'll see.

Something interesting to think about.

Yeah... it's a lot to think about man. It just... you know, if I was to start to think about all that (bleep) again I would get no work done. I'd just be sitting here going, "Duh..." so I just kinda just... I kinda figured, "You're here... you can go at any time," you know? "While you're here, have as much fun as you can." "My thing? I just want to make as much music as I can while I'm here. And, ahh... when I go that's something I get to leave behind for people to remember me by, and that's really all you can ask for.

ALBUM REVIEWS



BELIEVER

SANITY OBSCURE

Often I'll go back and grab a metal album from the past and just laugh my head off when I hear what I used to think was so cool. There are some exceptions though, and Believer is one of those bands that will always be "in style" in my opinion. Where many early Christian metal bands were mired in mediocrity, Believer executed some of the finest thrash metal known to man. *Sanity Obscure* was the band's second album and it is considered one of the classics of yesteryear. Highly technical thrash, with addicting, hypnotic riffs and aggressive drumming that pounded relentlessly at your skull. Angst-filled vocals that pierced the air, and insightful lyrics that rang of truth. The band also wowed fans by doing something that was unusual at that time. The song "Dies Irae" included operatic female vocals and violins mixed with the metal. The band pursued this direction even further on their third and final album, *Dimensions*. They even stepped out on a limb on *Sanity...* and covered U2's "Like a Song" to finish out the disc. Add to all of that a powerful, crystal-clear production and you had an album that was embraced by all thrash fans, regardless of beliefs. The band was rewarded for their toil by garnering a spot on tour with Bolt Thrower and Sacrifice.

Now almost 15 years later, this hard to find gem is being re-released by Retroactive Records. The label has also included a demo version of the song "IYF" as a bonus track. Once again, the masses will have another chance to hear this incredible band that influenced many others to push the envelope of quality and create brutal metal that begs to be heard and refuses to go out of style.

RIYL: Consecrator - *Image of Deception*; Extol - *Synergy*. [Retroactive] Matt Morrow



THE JELLY JAM

2

Ty Tabor, as anyone with ears knows, is an excellent guitar player. His playing has feeling and he knows how to control feedback, harmon-

ics, and has a great grasp of a myriad of tones. He's also a prolific songwriter and skilled singer. Some critics may think he's spreading himself too thin and, thus, the songwriting of his main band suffers as a result. Stylistically, Platypus, Jughead and Jelly Jam share some similarities, but only as much as a "Ty song" in the context of a King's X album (since he's the Jelly Jam vocalist), like "Mississippi Moon," or "Life Going By." Unlike Ty's true solo albums or even the Platypus *Icycles*, most of these tunes (like "Not Today" and "Angel or Devil") are driving, almost rollicking uptempo numbers that are vocally/melody line reminiscent of Jughead ("Halfway Home To Elvis," for example). If you're looking for that chilling slow number, look no further than the sad "You Don't Need Me Anymore." Lyrics are always open to interpretation, but tunes like "Empty" seem like they're treading familiar spiritual territory for Ty, sounding like a cry to the Author of an "old story book" to bring him something to fill his emptiness. The spoken word bits bring to mind that soliloquy from "Fishbowl Man." Not an "instant" album, but a dozen solid tunes that'll grow on ya. [Inside Out] Doug Van Pelt



GRETCHEN

IN THE MEAN TIME

Before Gretchen was born (no, the singer's name is not Gretchen), the duo of Mia and Dave Richards were in a lame band called Serenade. Her vocals were nice and all, but you could tell that Dave and company wanted to launch into something heavier. Gretchen's *Mouthful of Nails* was the next step. While the band touched some of the right areas, it seemed a comfortable identity escaped them. Fast forward to *In The Mean Time*. Here Mia's vocals soar without straining. Seems she's settled into a comfortable groove, and it works. Fans of the Italian band Lacuna Coil will have something to sink their teeth into (minus the dualing vocals, of course). Heavy, but not too fast. Dave makes time to let his guitar tones and notes breathe at a relaxed pace. Whether it's chugga-chugga crunch or simple sustained power chords, it really works well. Sure, there's exceptions, like the

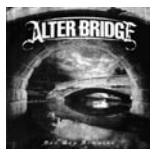
paradoxically-titled "Breathe," which jumps around almost like a pop punk song, but the album pretty much retains a somewhat dark, doomy and ethereal vibe throughout. Just about everything producer Travis Wyrick has touched lately shines. This is no exception. [MO] The Kern County Kid



PALE HORSE

UNTIL THE LAST SEAL IS OPENED

Old school thrash sounds so good sometimes. These guys were one of the hottest underground bands about a decade ago, their music circulating on the dying medium of cassette. Buzzsaw guitars racing at 90 mph with tight drumming and low, growling vocals pulsate with power. This stuff is brilliant. It's amazing that it's taken this long to resurface. Kudos to Bombworks for caring. [Bombworks] DV



ALTER BRIDGE

ONE DAY REMAINS

Calling this a "Stappless Creed" sells this album way too short. Unfortunately, the first single is the sappy "Open Your Eyes," which'll reinforce this misconception. While elsewhere there are familiar chord progressions that Mark Tremonti seems to feel way too comfortable with, it's vocalist Myles Kennedy (from the Mayfield Four) that steals the show here. Hearing his wail on the title track is all you need. That Chris Cornell fix will be met until... well, until you pop in that Audioslave or old Soundgarden album! Anyone who admits to liking Creed (you know who you are, and we all know you're over 30) already knows that Scott Phillips is one solid drummer, and Brian Marshall fills out this rhythm section quite nicely. Whether or not this is "Christian art" remains to be seen (let's just say it's secular), but a close look at "Shed My Skin" reveal in Tremonti a songwriter who cares about important things: "...It seems I've lost myself, it seems I've really lost my way... I'm dying to feel what I've lost." The title track (easily the stand-out cut) matter-of-factly tells the listener that, "in this world of give

and take, you must have faith." Those that miss Creed (already) have an ample replacement in Alter Bridge. [Wind-up] DV



ALEXI

THE MYSTERY

This guy packages art-rock up right (and he's not afraid to market his music - he took out a giant billboard on the side of a building last year during GMA Week). Proggers and fans of E.L.P., Wakeman or even Floyd will rejoice to hear cool sounds from this keyboardist. Who'd've thunk that a musician would attempt to hypnotize the music world with symphonic rock in 2004? But Alexi succeeds here with a consistent album (+bonus DVD). Ex-hippies beware: It might make you want to trip on acid again. [Mazzeroth] DV



THE SHOWDOWN

A CHORUS OF OBLITERATION

Bruce Fitzhugh knows a few things about metal, and he coaxed a killer album out of these guys. Don't be misled by the Nashville address of this record label. This stuff kills. One of the shrillest hardcore/metal hybrids to come out this year. [Mono Vs. Stereo] DV



GARY LENAIRE

THE LOST YEARS

Remember those Echo Hollow ads in HM awhile back? (What?! You haven't been reading HM? Shame on you!) Well, their second album, *Superficial Intelligence*, was put on hold amidst intra-band squabbling. A year or so later and Gary Lenaire takes matters into his own hands and releases it, along with some other songs he had hanging around. Not to be confused with his new rock band, Cripple Need Cane, this is mostly biting metallic stuff, much of it accompanied by the always welcome vocals of Guy Ritter. One interesting tune of note is "Late Movie," which sounds more like a G N' R (Axle) ballad than a King Diamond epic. The songs aren't as memorable as *Diet of Worms*, are significantly slower and

somewhat disappointing, but it's as close as we can get (and it's distant) to old school Tourniquet these days... [Indie] DV



JAGGED DOCTRINE

THE CIRCLE TRILOGY SOUNDTRACK

The best thing that ever happened to industrial music was the re-discovery of the distorted electric guitar. Can I hear an "Amen?" If you are with me in the congregation today, you will rejoice over our selection. Jagged Doctrine has undertaken a project here called *The Circle Trilogy Soundtrack* (a soundtrack for the popular novel by Ted Dekker). Filled with dynamic twists and turns, it's aggressive and mellow in all the right places. I don't hear a crossover hit (probably due to minimal vocals), but I hear plenty (cool instrumentation) to keep me prowling the dark dance floor with my best Neo kickboxing moves. Heck, I might even believe that the *Matrix* is real cuz of these hypnotic tunes. [Indie] KCK



FEARSCAPE

SLEEPING IN LIGHT

Raw, intense thrashing death metal. Sounds like Steve Rowe picked a perfect band to revitalize his label. With growls as base and low as Crimson Thorn's Luke Renno and song titles like, "Fall Of Icarus," you can't help but earn metal brownie points here. All kidding aside, this is some serious and, albeit lo-fi, heavy metal. [Rowe Productions] DV



CARLOS SOTO

TRIBAL BEHAVIOR

Fans of Billy Sheehan and instru-shred albums should appreciate the prowess of the Tribus man. Every song is all bass (double-neck fretted, fretless, lead and rhythm distortion bass, and bass synthesizer), but yet holds your attention with creative and tasteful playing. [Indie] DV



VENI DOMINE

IIII:THE ALBUM OF LABOUR

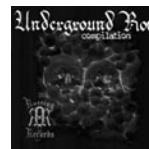
This power metal outfit from Sweden is a testimony to perseverance. Released seven years after its conception, it still sounds amazingly fresh. Fredrik Ohlsson's vocals are all Geoff Tate-ish, and the musical backbone is all Sacred Warrior/Halloween/Maiden. Very solid. The bluesy guitar in "Deep Down Under" is sweet. [Rivel] DV



SYMPATHY

ARCANE PATH

This amazing 1-man project is a mind-blowing and chaotic aural onslaught that doesn't let up for 47 minutes. Wow! Fantastic guitar chops and speedy drumming rule the day. Get this now. [Fear Dark] DV



VARIOUS ARTISTS

UNDERGROUND ROT

This compilation joins heavy hitters Metanoia, Encryptor, Demoniciduth, Benevolence, Sorrowstorm, and others for a blistering set of extreme death, black, and grind metal. Kudos to Rotting Records for the guts to gather 17 tracks of blistering noise for our ears. A great place to discover new acts like Nova Lex, as well as a veteran outfit like Frank's Enemy. [Rotting] DV



ORPHAN PROJECT

ORPHAN FOUND

Clean, melodic prog rock is the medium for a cohesive record that explores the questions, feelings, and experience of being adopted as a child. This kind of music must be performed with skill and feature a great vocalist to keep from sucking. Thankfully, Shane Lankford (vocalist) and friends deliver the goods. [Indie] DV

LICKS & TRICKS

By Jeff Scheetz

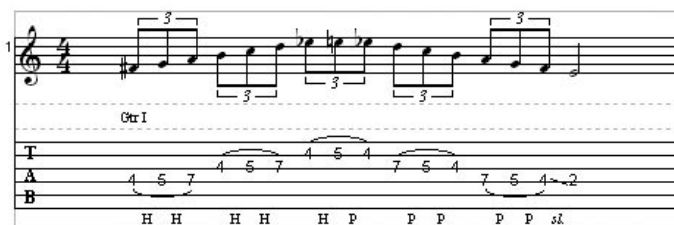


Return of the son of Licks and Tricks

A smooth legato lick is a thing of beauty. And when you put that together with a “blue” note, you get a nice combination of styles. This lick will give you a good warm up to get your speed up, and it will bend your ear a bit when we add the flat 5 note.

There are so many ways to play, that it seems logical to me to be able to walk the line between styles. Kind of like walking down the aisle in a supermarket and picking items from each side and throwing them in your basket. A Dorian lick here, a blues bend there, an impulse arpeggio at the checkout stand.... Etc. etc. Then again maybe I am just strange :o)

Play this one slowly at first and gradually speed it up to tempo.



You can get more lessons at jeffscheetz.com

DRUM & DRUMMER

By John Simmons



Drumming and Dominion

Before we begin to actually study the art of drumming, it is useful to lay down some guiding principles in order to have a clear understanding of what we are doing and why we are doing it. I ask you then to bear with me during these initial columns; we will get to the actual “licks and tricks” in due time!

All of man's activity begins with the “Dominion Mandate” given to our first father in Genesis 1:28. Adam was told to “subdue” the Earth. This commandment was reiterated to our father Noah after the Flood. Mankind, as God's vice-regent, is to lay hold of the Creation and to order it to His glory.

The Lord Jesus restated this mandate in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) as He instructed us to “disciple the nations.” St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, tells us that whatever we do, we are to do to God's glory.

Here, then, are the foundational principles guiding not only our drumming, but everything else. But as drummers, we take hold of the creatures of time, space, sound, rhythm and matter, as well as the cultural creations of music, style, art and aesthetics. Through the use of our God-given and redeemed wills, we seek to impose order on these things, in such a manner that God is glorified and well pleased.

This is what we are doing, ultimately, when we pick up the sticks and begin to study drumming. It's a huge responsibility. That doesn't mean we can't enjoy it, and it doesn't mean we have to go about it with grim, solemn faces on all the time. But we ought never be flippant about it. We ought not settle for doing it half-heartedly.

Keeping these principles in mind will get you through the tough times to come, those days when you just don't feel like practicing, or when nothing seems to go right at a gig or worship service. Remember, you are doing it to God's glory! You are spreading Christ's dominion over the culture! You, sitting in your little room, running through some grueling exercise for the millionth time, are advancing the Kingdom of Heaven. How cool is that?

[John Simmons is the drummer for Atomic Opera (among other things) and a drum teacher in Houston, Texas. His website is www.johnnydrums.com. Please visit and send him an email. He lives for that.]

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

What happened to The Jesus Metal Revolution?

In 1984 I took hold of the Christian metal idea & made it my life's goal to take the message of Christ to the world's metal scene through Christian metal music. This music soon became a Revolution world wide. Stryper in The US, Jerusalem in Europe & Rosanna's Raiders in Australia. Latter on Barren Cross, Whitecross, Bloodgood, Deliverance & Leviticus just launched what I call The Jesus Metal Revolution.

So, what has happened to Christian Alternative music? The bands have swallowed the lie that Jesus lyrics will stop them (from) creating something that is successful. It is a reflection of a large portion of today's church. People seeking God for what He can do for them & not for Who He is and what they can do for Him within His will for them.

It is all about their music career! If they want that, then they should go out into the big bad music world & be professional musicians just like Galactic Cowboys did. A very credible band of Christians rather than a Christian band. This is the way career minded Christian musicians should go. Problem is that it is too easy to make money quickly in the Christian music market.

Thus our Christian Bookstores are full of message-less "Christian" bands. Stryper proved in the '80's & are reproving again that a strong Jesus message will be accepted if your music is excellent. Stryper is the best hard rock act in the world. They blow Motley Crue, Poison and Guns & Roses into the weeds. The only bands that come close to Stryper's unique ability are Ratt and The Scorpions.

But it is not all bad in Christian hard music. It seems the bands staying

true to a Metal sound are staying true to the strong Christian message. For example, Narnia (Sweden) Exousia (Mexico) Ultimatum (USA) & Anti Demon (Brazil). All having evangelism as a primary goal. But will you find these bands in a Christian Bookstore? Not likely.

So Christian Metal bands and fans, let us lead the way in keeping The Jesus Metal Revolution alive. Speak to your local Christian Bookstore about bands that have no message. Christian bookstores & Christian music festivals are places where Christians can go to experience Christian music that will edify them in their walk with Christ. If you want to hear music about someone's girlfriend, skateboard or road-trip, go out and buy a Green Day or Blink 182 CD. If you want to hear Jesus metal or simply Jesus rock, work to educate your local bookstore & only purchase bands with a strong Jesus message.

I still listen to Maiden, Motorhead & Napalm Death because they rule at what they do. But I listen to a lot of Jerusalem, Stryper and, as a modern day example, Disciple. They are the band that you should be buying from your bookstores & hunt down the best Jesus metal at soundmass.com or blastbeats.com

I thank God everyday for Glenn Kaiser & Rez & Ulf Christianson & Jerusalem for being my stepping stone back into the Faith, the Church & God's will for my life. It's time to take a stand for Jesus again. Metal fans need to be saved & Christian metal fans need to be encouraged to stand strong in the Faith.



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SOUND ADVICE

By Pastor Bob

Mystery, Intrigue, Suspense

I always enjoy reading Church billboards as I drive. Many are meant to be funny – some are ironic.

"Don't let your stress kill you. Let the Church help!"

"Having truth decay? Brush up on your Bible!"

"God answers 'Knee Mail'"

"This Church is 'Prayer Conditioned.'"

There is a little Church close to my home that usually catches my eye. Every couple of months they advertise "REVIVAL" Friday night at 7:00 – as if they have a private line to God, and are able to predict what He is going to do. Lately they have been doing a 10 week study called "Knowing The Mind Of Christ."

If there is anything I have learned after being a Christian for 47 years, it is that God is fully unpredictable. Just about the time I think I have Him all figured out, He does something I don't understand. I plan "revival," and He doesn't seem to show up. And then, during the

strangest and most unexpected times, He moves in my heart and brings me to my knees.

The thing I enjoy most in my present relationship with God is His MYSTERY. God loves a good mystery. He is full of wonders, miracles, and exciting surprises! That is what faith is all about – a mystery for which you don't have an answer, a problem for which you don't have the solution. Through faith, you ask God for the answer to your puzzles and He reveals it to you – sometimes very mysteriously, but usually unpredictably. At times, God may deliberately hide His purpose from you for the moment, knowing that otherwise you might put up a fight. Other times, His ways are above our comprehension.

These days, the most popular books teach the principles of God and the truths of walking with Him. Those are great for your foundation in the Christian faith. But there must be that element of your walk with God that remains mysterious. The object is to stay close to Him. Listen to His voice. Feel His Spirit. See His visions. Dream His dreams. Be sensitive to His direction and His voice, and you will know the answers to His little mysteries with which He loves to guide us.



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change, new things to express...new ways and abilities to express ourselves musically. Too much has happened already. This musical journey has been a long-standing presence in my life. There was a time when I realized that God was using me and music together for a mutual good. Before I was playing Christian rock I would give music away to friends and strangers, pass out *Visions of Grey* (zine) and stuff like that. My friend Turtle and I ran this sort of radical back-alley outreach and would bring in Nailed and Disciple to youth clubs and housing projects. Other times we would have a ton of people over for jam sessions. Eventually I started playing drums seriously after a long hiatus and joined Human Resource Foundation and did a studio recording. Because of that I met Mia and Dave. I thought that would be my peak when that band broke up and I was ready to sell my gear and focus on a college career. No kidding, the very day I was ready and making calls to sell my drums Dave called me about playing with them. Read into that what you will, but it appeared to me to be one of those divine-coincidences that couldn't be ignored. So, it's been this progressive awakening, a progressive walk... why should I expect anything less?

What led to the direction of sound on this new album?

Dave: Really man, this is us. We took 5 weeks to record, which was way more than we did last time. There wasn't any outside pressure saying to do this or that, or more importantly telling us to stop before we felt that a song was finished. So I feel like we actually got to express ourselves and our heart... In the studio with the actual sound, a bunch of that comes from Travis Wyrick coaching us.. We'd have this idea, and he'd say you can do better than that and really press us like a good coach does with an athletic team. You never get down when you're around Travis – he's all about the business and God and keeps you charged up in a positive manner. Emotionally, I think there's a lot on this record because we've all been through some stuff... and we're still hanging on... and we decided we were just going to write what we felt – nothing more, nothing less – good – bad – whatever.

Stephen: I think we made a complete break from the early, early stuff – some of which resonated on *Mouth Full of Nails*. Like Dave says, this is us. There was more vision, a greater sense of identity as a band that came with writing all of this material with the same line-up. I think we have achieved a "sound" that is uniquely our own and that we can identify with confidently.

What would you say you offer that's different than Evanescence?

Mia: Well, first off you won't catch us in Revolver magazine wearing a Stavsacre shirt while flipping off the photographer. Second, I would have to say variety. Even though some of our music contains elements that people have described as "Evanescence-esque," the music overall has many different elements of songwriting style. That's partially because I get bored easily. There is nothing I hate more than to buy a CD and every song sound the same.

Dave: Yeah, I don't think that we sound like them at all, but I think we are more diverse across the board musically – I know some people may initially make that connection when they hear "Fading" – but really we aren't doing the same thing... When you see E– just know you are seeing a product put out by a huge money machine – that's not where we are coming from.

What similarities might you make about Gretchen and Evanescence?

Mia: Well, I think the main similarity is the element of combining heavy guitars with melodic female vocal lines. However, I think that's where the similarities stop; other than Barlow Girls or maybe Lacuna Coil, there's just not a lot of bands like us out there right now (that are getting attention) that people can compare us to. For example, before Evanescence emerged, we were constantly labeled as a heavier edged No Doubt, which couldn't be further from the truth. Probably a little closer to a comparable sound (depending on the song) would be Veruca Salt.

Dave: Yeah, the big problem with comparisons is that you can probably count on one hand the number of female rockers – and any that have any kind of widespread popularity – really don't sound like us. I think that we'd be a good match up with E–on tour... I think that we are heavy – but not the same... It's weird that in Christian music right now there's a few people that have put out these songs that sound very similar to E– and they have sold tons – but then the rest of the album is very much watered down... I guess on one hand that's okay – and in a way you have to commend them for at least being smart enough to cash in on it...

But with us we aren't trying to sound like them... We had stuff in this exact same vein on the last CD – just listen to "Ordinary Girl" (which, by the way, was out before E) I think that was the precursor to what is our sound now.

What challenges does a woman face in your position?

Mia: Beyond being the focal point of the band, I realize that I am also a role model. I am very conscious of what I say or do on stage or off. I know that these young girls and guys for that matter are watching me. I was looking at a magazine the other day with Avril Lavigne on the cover. Inside, I couldn't believe how this magazine was talking about her being able to drink anybody under the table, all the while showing her flipping a bird at the camera wearing an oversized belt buckle that spelled out F***. Maybe it's just me, but there's something terribly screwed up about that. I want women to know that it's OK to be feminine and strong and follow your dreams and still be able to get up in the morning and stand what you see in the mirror.

What led to you forming as a trio? Tell us about picking up the bass? Tell us about acquiring the skills to both play bass and sing?

Mia: Well after going through about 3 or 4 bass players, we started talking about what we needed to do to change our situation. You have to understand, with the exception of a couple of bass players that were "for hire," the trauma of going through the loss of a band member was like getting a divorce; as I said before, "This is our life, this is who we are..." Anyway, I played a little guitar and had always had a secret desire to learn how to play bass, so pretty much I just laid it out on the table. I said to David "let me try it" and the rest is history. We've had tons of positive response about it since then, most of it in the form of "Wow, a chick that plays bass and sings...that's so cool." Also, as a trio we've seemed to become more cohesive in a lot of ways... especially when writing new material. I think, with "In the Meantime," we have definitely matured in our writing style. I don't want us to ever get stuck in a stylistic rut and not be open to becoming better at what we do.

What do you think about being on the cover of the first issue of the Re-Launch of Heaven's Metal Magazine?

Mia: It's an incredible idea and an incredible honor. Thanks, Doug.

Stephen: I never would have thought in a million years...glad to be a part of it!

Dave: Considering the other great band that was on your first cover – I'm totally blown away to be in the same company. I wish you many great things with your endeavour. →

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Savatage cont'd

Uh huh... What books have you read recently that have blown you away, and why did they blow you away?

Ahh... wow... The last book I read was a fiction story I can't even remember the title because the front page was (bleep) up. It was actually a book that a friend of mine gave me to read and umm... It was kind of like an all-out *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* type of story, but it was really heavy, man. I wish I could remember the damn title of it. I don't remember the author or anything, but it was really good. I'm not a big reader so, um... I'm a magazine reader, I'm not a book reader. I'll read *Time* and *Newsweek* and stuff... but I'm not really into books... I don't really have the time

to sit and read a book.

Well Jon, I've enjoyed talking to you.

Ok, well thank you, Boss...

Sure, I hope your spiritual quest... I hope you have time. I can relate to, you know, wanting to set aside time in the future for that.

Ok, well definitely!

Hope it all comes.

Okay, Boss.

Alright, have a great time in Europe.

You take care now.

You too, Jon.

See ya.

→

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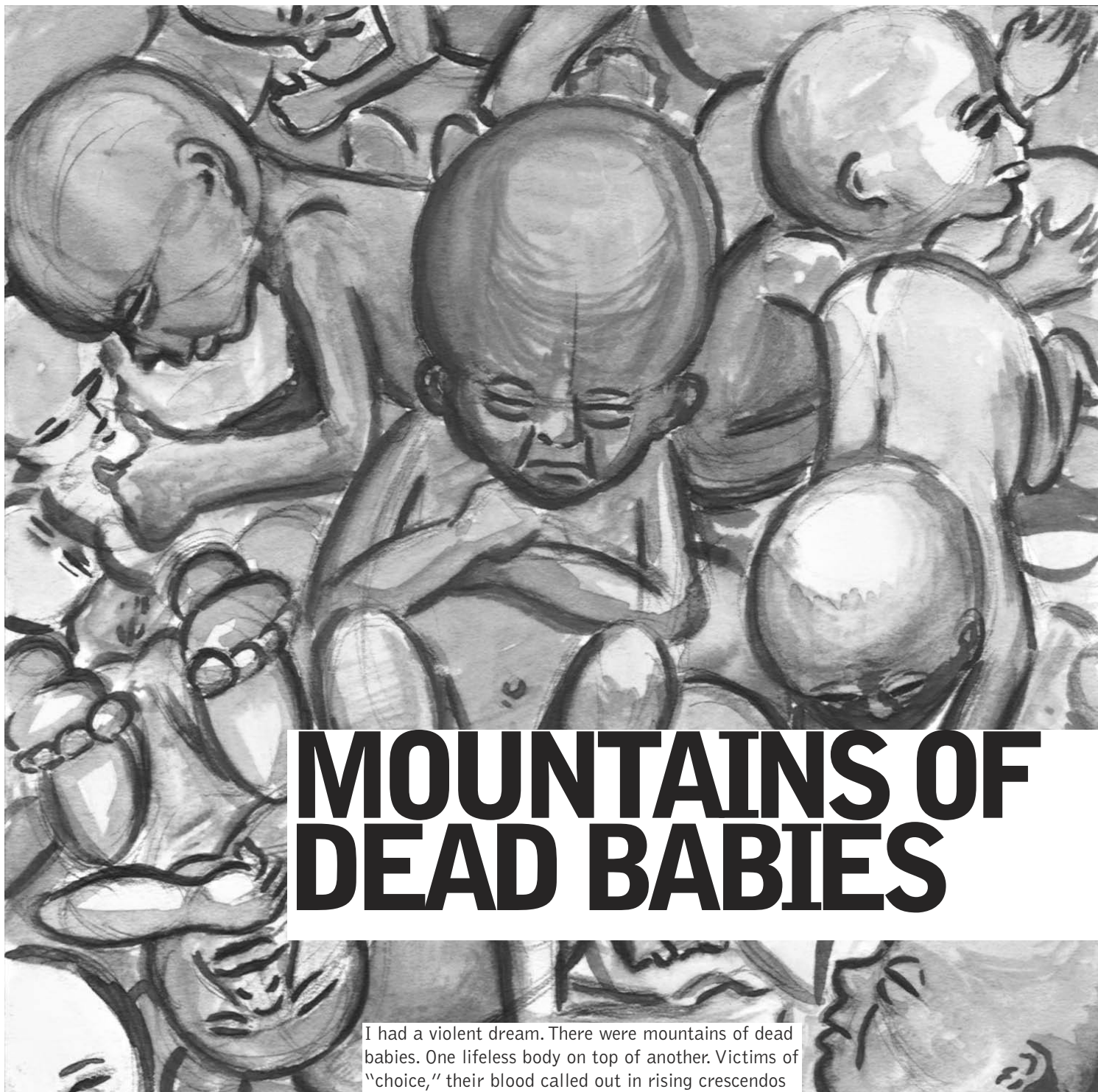
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MOUNTAINS OF DEAD BABIES

I had a violent dream. There were mountains of dead babies. One lifeless body on top of another. Victims of "choice," their blood called out in rising crescendos of unwelcome, disturbing, and uncomfortable volume,

ready to explode like a volcano. This pile of carnage was two stories high, and it was located in the parking lot of a shopping mall. Some people stopped to look. Some quickened their pace, others stopped, their eyes tearing up for a moment, but they all walked by. Champs was having a sale on NBA jerseys and Nextel had a free phone offer going on. The site was beginning to stink, it seemed impossible to ignore, but this didn't seem to hinder a single shopper's experience. Some complained to mall security that a protest of sorts was going on, but no one stopped to do anything. No one realized that life could not be normal while this is going on right under our noses. Someone is killing our generation. Yesterday it was about 4,000. Today will be more of the same. How high will this mountain get before we do something? How long before this volcanic atrocity explodes in our faces? What will you do about it?